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Rumi's cognitive therapy approach to health and disease



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ABSTRACT

Background: In the history of Persian literature, Rumi is a unique figure in terms of the extent of information and ideas, excitement, outpouring, diversity of themes, full awareness of the human psyche, and the knowledge of pain, understanding the causes of diseases and their treatment.

Methods: This is a qualitative study using analytical deduction method. Resources related to the subject matter, the meaning, and implication of cognitive-behavioral concepts, symbols, emblems, and parables in Masnavi and other works of Rumi were studied.

Results: The results indicate Rumi believes that psychological disorders such as depression do not belong to individuals with a history of childhood psychological trauma but it is common in all humans,

and it can result from repeated vain thoughts and personal cognitive distortions. From the perspective of Rumi, a seeker prevents the penetration of negative automatic thoughts into psyche (inherent self) by mastering the subjective identity (self). On the contrary, disability and succumbing to the influx of mental automatic and dysfunctional thoughts are the main causes of mental illness; their repetition and continuity end in the dissociation from his inherent self.

Conclusion: For Rumi, staying away from primordial nature and separation from essence brings the drought and coldness of December that makes human life and existence cold, dry, and barren. Continuation of this condition causes the emergence of mental illness such as depression.

Keywords: Health, cognitive therapy, cognitive distortions, Jalal al-Din Muhammad Rumi

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INTRODUCTION

In the history of Persian literature, Rumi is a unique figure in terms of the extent of information and ideas, excitement, outpouring, diversity of themes, full awareness of the human psyche, and the knowledge of pain, understanding the causes of diseases and their treatment.¹ Schimmel² believes that the teachings presented by Rumi in Masnavi are a comprehensive translation of Quran.² Ernest Renon, a Canadian researcher, argues that Rumi's compositions address the reflection of distress, suffering, anxiety, fears, and despair of the new generation effectively.

His speeches are shocking songs that free readers from astonishment and confusion.³ Coleman Barks, a famous contemporary American researcher on the works of Rumi, states that his country felt poverty and helplessness and it needed to have a pretext for deliverance from spiritual poverty; it could remove its poverty by familiarity with a perfect person like Maulana.⁴

The teachings of Jalal ad-Din Mohammad Balkhi in Masnavi, which is a manifestation of the most comprehensive and dynamic exploration of the human spirit in form of anecdotes, stories, and wisdom or in other poses such as Fihi Ma Fihi and Seven Sessions (the most abstracts in the form of allegory and interpretation for truth seekers) are

signs of generality and depth of Rumi's approach to the universe, the man, and his Creator.⁵

Khalifeh⁶ believes that Masnavi is an interwoven portrayal of human levels of existence forcing the audience to move towards an internal exploration. This symbolic movement and journey is an affective exploration to analyze the secrets of the universe. Man returns to himself in this journey and is connected to his divine essence. The result of this lifesaving connection is the freedom of a suffered and troubled man from the trap of alienation, dejection, and despair and achieving the joyful expansion and ecstatic vitality. This happiness differs from superficial and fleeting joys that result in depression and despair Using symbols allegories and various emblems in the stories of Masnavi, which is a criticism of human conditions, Rumi tries to show that the reason for human captivity is the governance of a fake and precarious destructive phenomenon, coercions environmental factors. The subject and the target of the coercions is the human mind. On the one hand, the society tries to induce its traditional, arbitrary, and value-based frameworks to the mind of individuals; on the other hand, the mind becomes a means for carrying traditions and values.⁷

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Continuation and repetition of false suggestions to mind cause cognitive distortions and false beliefs, which is a symptom of mood and mental diseases such as depression.⁸ Cognitive distortions are a result of learning, and they can be removed through learning.⁹ In cognitive therapy, the most focus is placed on the present thoughts of the patient. This method puts a profound influence upon the cognitive structure and the cognitive and emotional processing system of the patient.¹⁰ Cognitive therapy approach emphasizes on one's attitude of self and his knowledge of the surrounding environment.¹¹ The question is how disorder does emerge according to Rumi's idea, and what are the most important cognitive distortions and false beliefs resulting in disorder from the perspective of Rumi. Due to the widespread psychological mood disorders such as depression in Iran,^{12,13} long-term mental illness and high drug and its therapeutic costs, replacing the correct and logical cognitive patterns and beliefs compatible with primordial nature is essential to prevent and treat more stable as well as less costly. The motivation for this issue is important for two reasons. First, universal comprehensiveness of Rumi's thoughts and the depth of his ideas represent complexities of understanding the psyche. Second, his effective style of expression in the application of allegories, the accurate selection of symbols and emblems make the story more effective, and the readers are identified with characters. Providing consistent recognition patterns with primordial human nature is more stable through the study of Rumi's thought in comparison with other common cognitive patterns because Rumi considers basic treatment of the human psyche as the correct understanding of the self and reformation of worldview. For him, other treatments will not be successful until these two factors are available.¹⁴

Accordingly, it is very important to study this subject. This article tries to explain the way of forming mental disorders, most dysfunctional beliefs, and cognitive distortions effective in psychological vulnerability from the perspective of Rumi. Moreover, it addresses the opinion of Rumi about effective factors on the achievement of sustainable mental health.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is a qualitative research using analytical deduction method. First, the researcher studies the resources related to the subject matter, the meaning, and implication of cognitive-behavioral concepts, symbols, emblems, and parables in Masnavi and other works of Rumi. This research

aims to determine the quality of forming mental disorders and the ways to treat them in the works of Rumi in a cognitive approach. The following texts have been analyzed in this regard:

1. The study of two Rumi's important works (*Masnavi* and *The Works of Shams of Tabriz*). Several interpretations and comments have been studied including Description of Masnavi in three volumes by Frozanfar, Love Decorator: A Thematic Description of Masnavi by Karim Zamani, Description of Masnavi by Jalal al-Din Homaei, and some writings of Hossein Elahi Qomshei about Rumi and his ideas.
2. The works of some cognitive behavioral psychoanalysts and the treatment methods for the patients suffering from mental and mood disorders to find common characteristics and principles.
3. The works of a famous researcher studying Rumi's life and works with a psychological approach to his ideas such as Mohammad Jafar Mosafa's *Vain Thoughts, With the Wise of Balkh*, and *In Prison of Thought and Knowledge*.
4. The speeches and lectures by famous researchers with a psychological approach to the analysis of Rumi's thoughts including 156 lectures by Professor Panevis and the comments to these lectures.

RESULTS

Formation of Mental Disorders

In the stories of Masnavi and other works, Rumi tries to show that the reason for human captivity is the governance of a fake and precarious destructive phenomenon, coercions environmental factors. The subject and the target of the coercions is the human mind. Continuation and repetition of false suggestions to mind cause the formation of a subjective identity that far him from his genuine identity. He describes the inductions and vain thoughts as rubbish jumping to human self and brings pain and unrest.⁷

"A piece of rubbish jumps into the mouth of a living man, and only when he ejects he is at ease".⁵

In order to answer the way of forming mental diseases through a cognitive approach, two stories in Masnavi are analyzed.

About the story of "*How the countryman deceived the townsman and invited him with humble entreaties and great importunity*". Muhammad Jafar Mosafa argues that the countryman or partial reason is the

destructive community that attacks the world of the pure child (townsman) by its inductions, suggestions, and temptations, so that impose on him its preconstructed limited and closed framework. Townsman, or the helpful and insightful aspect of human, resists for ten years to reject the templates of society induction and disregards induced symptoms that are on the contrary to nature of man. Finally, the multiplicity of suggestions by society, emphasis, and insists make the man submitted to the templates of self. Thus, cognitive patterns of distortion and false beliefs are imposed on him.⁷

*“The countryman used blandishments in ingratiating himself, until he made the Khwaja’s prudence crazy. He (the Khwaja) was distracted by message upon message, until the clear water of his prudence became turbid”.*¹⁶

Humans with an innate nobility will not be affected by the seduction of mind easily, but the destructive society forces him to give up.

*“Do you deem it right that I should go into the country, with the result that the King would knit his brows (in wrath)? How should I heal (assuage) his anger after that? Surely, by this (offence) I should bury myself alive.”*¹⁶

The conflict of mental self-seeking to enter the village of Soul (Countryman) and the useful reason is wanting to maintain a man in his pure nature (townsman) is evident in this story. It addresses the attracted and merry mental self:

*“Rejoice in Him, do not rejoice in aught except Him: He is (as) the spring, and (all) other things (as) the month of December. O blind asses, in this direction there are snares; in this direction, there are bloodsheds (concealed) in ambush. You must set foot on the plain of the heart (spirit) because in the plain of (the body’s) clay there is no opening (for spiritual progress). The heart is the abode of security, O friends; (it has) fountains and rose-gardens within rose-gardens. Do not go to the country: the country makes a fool of a man, it makes the intellect void of light and splendor. What is “the country”? The Shaykh that has not been united (with God), but has become addicted to conventionality and argument”.*¹⁶

For Rumi, staying away from primordial nature and separation from essence brings the drought and coldness of December that makes human life and existence cold, dry, and barren. Continuation

of this condition causes the emergence of mental illness such as depression.

In *“Story of those who ate the young elephant from greed and because they neglected the advice of the sincere counsellor”*, the main cause of human imprisonment by self (mental self) is greed and avarice. In this story, a group of people travels to India for business. They meet an insightful scientist in their path; he advises them not to hunt the young elephants and not to eat them. They do not pay attention to his advice. They hunt young elephants, but the sheikh avoids eating the meat. He is awake, and they are asleep; the mother of young elephants comes at night and smells the mouth of slept man and kills those who have killed his child but lets the insightful man to go.⁷

*“The smell put to shame the deviser of fraud: the elephant knows the smell of her child. Thou art sleeping, and (meanwhile) the smell of that unlawful deed (of thine) is beating on the azure sky. It accompanies thy foul breaths; it ascends to the smellers (examiners) in the celestial sphere. The smell of pride and the smell of greed and the smell of concupiscence will become, in speaking, like (the smell of) onions”.*¹⁶

From the viewpoint of Rumi, man cannot represent his beauty only through spiritual purification, domination over his inner land, and decoration of self; otherwise, he represents ugliness and hatred. The inner natural sense of happiness and self-satisfaction is met when he returns to the world of primordial nature. The continuation of this condition alienates man.⁷

*“Do not make your home in (other) men’s land: do your own work, do not do the work of a stranger. Who is the stranger? Your earthen body, for the sake of which is (all) your sorrow.”*¹⁷

For Rumi, the main cause of mental disorder in human beings is moving away from the ego principle, which is divine, pure primordial nature.

Cognitive Distortions: Causes of Mental Illness

For Rumi, subjective identity or mental self that is established due to social arbitrary inductions and values imposes some attributes to mind while each attribute causes a mental illness such as depression.

OBSOLESCENCE, MECHANICAL QUALITIES, AND STEREOTYPES OF THE SELF

There is some diversity in the inherent human condition; life is a dynamic movement, and it is

new in every moment such as running water or for children states. After the establishment of a series of fictitious and arbitrary values in mind instead of spiritual and indigenous states, existence is changed to a mechanical, fabricated, and stereotype device. By pressing specific buttons, the person shows same reactions. He sees the world from an obsolete device and an enclosed room window of the world (worldview). Continuation of such perspective results in absurdity and depression.¹⁴ In the perspective of Rumi, the universe is always changing and becoming new.

*At every moment (appears) a new form and a new beauty, so that from seeing the new (visions) ennui dies away.*¹⁸

*“It is ever changing, like a (fleeting) picture: the spirit beholds in clairvoyance a world (appearing) anew and anew. (Everything), though it be Paradise and the rivers of Eden, becomes ugly when it is congealed (fixed permanently) in one aspect.”*¹⁸

NARROW PERSPECTIVE

Having a narrow perspective is one of the results of subjective identity that has departed man from unity. Earlier, mind had been a holistic thinking quality and acted as a unit like a holistic mirror. After the formation of identity, it is broken and acts as a representative of one of the selves. Apart from unity, it gives individuals a kind of small deep disappointment. Before the formation of subjective identity, the man had been a part of being and as big as the being regardless of thinking about its bigness.¹⁴ In the story of “*Elephant in the dark room*,” elephant (collection of life) is a part of a whole being, and darkroom represents subjective identity constructed of illusions. The subjective identity observes the exact thing that it likes, and every person sees the elephant according to his narrow mental framework. At the end of the story, “*If there had been a candle in each one’s hand, the difference would have gone out of their words*.”¹⁶ Therefore, the holistic view changes mind’s darkroom bright and transforms the cynicism of the universe and its events.

SQUINTED VIEW

Subjective identity imposes some qualities to the mind including squinted view, illusion, closeness, and layered formal and rigid relation to life. Continuation and stability of this situation imprison a man in the jail of subjective identity (self); thus, life is consumed in wretchedness, boredom, and unhappiness. In this regard, Rumi states, “*How should one make merry who is bound in chains?*

*When does the captive in prison behave like the man who is free?”*⁷ Rumi continues:

*“Bodies are like pots with the lids on: look and see what is in each pot. If you keep your eye fixed on its contents, you are a (spiritual) king; but if you regard its vessel, you are misguided.”*¹⁸

*“If thou keep looking at the glass (lantern), thou wilt be lost, because from the glass arise the numbers of (the plurality inherent in) dualism; But if thou keep thy gaze (fixed) upon the Light, thou wilt be delivered from dualism and the numbers (plurality) of the finite body.”*¹⁸

*“Anger and lust make a man squint-eyed, they change the spirit (so that it departs) from rectitude.”*¹⁸

Somewhere else, he states:

*“We have all become satisfied with (reading) the table of contents, because we are steeped in cupid-ity and vain desire.”*¹⁸

According to Rumi, greed causes squinted view. When a person sees himself humiliated or absurd, he seeks the world from this humiliated identification perspective. The identification is also the reflection if humiliation and both are based on illusion.

Expressions like “*One nothing has fallen in love with another nothing*” and “*(one) thought feeds on another thought*” indicate this idea. By presenting this pattern of thought and replacing it to dysfunctional mental patterns, Rumi frees man from the feelings of inferiority and worthlessness that are symptoms of depressed persons.⁷

SELF’S EMPTINESS

From the perspective of Rumi, man is empty as long as he is in the captivity of self; he is deceived by some social expressions, words, and titles. Since the empty man sees his existence full of hatred and boredom, he seeks natural love and happiness in the outside. Continuation of this situation leads man to absurdity and disappointment.⁷

*“Hast thou ever seen a name without the reality (denoted by the name)? Or hast thou plucked a rose (gul) from the (letters) gáf and lám of (the word) gul? Thou hast pronounced the name: go, seek the thing named. Know that the moon is on high, not in the water of the stream. If thou wouldst pass beyond name and letter, oh, make thyself wholly purged of self. Make thyself pure from the attributes of self, that thou mayst behold thine own pure untarnished essence.”*¹⁵

For Rumi, a full man will not change in terms of mental and spiritual attributes because he is full of love and happiness from inside; for him, social titles are arbitrary, not inherent.

“He in whose face the Beloved smiles sweetly, what harm can befall him from the sour looks of (other) people? He on whose eye the Beloved bestows a kiss, how should he grieve at Heaven and its anger?”¹⁷

EXISTENCE OF SELF BETWEEN TWO ILLUSIONARY TIMES OF PAST AND FUTURE

According to psychoanalysis, living at the present is one of the characteristics of healthy people who enjoy vitality and prosperity.⁹ Rumi alarms many times in different forms that the reason for man's sufferings and a man's jail is his vain thoughts that carries man to his past frustrations and fears him from illusionary future; meantime, the present, which is the real time, is destructed.

“Thought is of the past and future; when it is emancipated from these two, the difficulty is solved.”¹⁷

“All creatures are subjugated to thought; for that reason they are sore in heart and practiced in sorrow. I am the ruler of thought, not ruled (by it), because the builder is ruler over the building.”¹⁷

In the story of “Linguists and ship owner” and “Four Indian in mosque”, Rumi introduces the way to cure vain thoughts maintaining man in the suffering past: “Abstain from (distracting) thoughts, abstain: thought is (like) the lion and the wild ass, and (men's) hearts are the thickets (which they haunt).” He suggests removing metal self to achieve mental health.⁷

CULTURAL INFERIORITY AGAINST MASS SUGGESTIONS

Inferiority against mass suggestions blinds individuals in relation to life events; it disappoints and distrusts one from his abilities. Continuation and stability of mass suggestions lead to false beliefs. In the story of “Students and teachers of the school”, Rumi refers deliberately to this subject. Students state to the teacher her face is pale and yellow; he believes in their suggestion that he is sick and closes the class due to his illness. When the parents notice of his illness, they go to see him and see him in bed. In order to be free from mass suggestions, Rumi states:

*“(If) you have an eye, look with your own eye: do not look through the eye of an ignorant fool.
(If) you have an ear, hearken with your own ear: why be dependent on the ears of blockheads?”*

Make a practice of seeing (for yourself) without blindly following any authority: think in accordance with the view of your own reason.”¹⁸

Be a man and be not subject to men. Go, take your own head (choose your own way), and be not one whose head is turning (bewildered in search of a guide).”¹⁵

Mindfulness

Another key concept in the teachings of Rumi is mindfulness. This concept has beautifully been expressed in the form of a story called “Guest-house” in the fifth book of his Masnavi: “Comparison of the human body to a guest-house and of the diverse thoughts to the diverse guests. The gnostic, acquiescing in those thoughts of sorrow or joy, resembles a hospitable person who treats strangers with kindness, like Khalil (Abraham); for Khalil's door was always open to receive his guest with honour-infidel and true believer and trusty and treacherous alike; and he would show a cheerful face to all his guests.”

“This body, O youth, is a guest house: every morning a new guest comes running (into it). Beware, do not say, “This (guest) is a burden to me,” for presently he will fly back into non-existence. Whatsoever comes into thy heart from the invisible world is thy guest: entertain it well!”¹⁸

Accepting and welcoming the positive and negative experiences, distance from vain thoughts, other cognitive distortions and dropping them, and acceptance and welcoming of grief as prelude to the arrival of lasting blessings and happiness are the main points in the ideas of Rumi implied from earlier thinkers such as Keft Zin who had provided a scientific definition of mindfulness for treatment.¹⁹ Grief and sorrow play important roles in Rumi's teachings and in current mindfulness (ACT) that are observed in patients who have accepted the bitter past experiences as they are submitted to treatment.

Return to Original Self is only way to Lasting Health of Spirit and Mind

The main message of all stories of Masnavi as well as other writing by Rumi is that one should remove his mind and dominate over it if he would like to achieve prosperity, natural joy, hope, and vitality. Man's attitude to self and the world reforms in light of these efforts.⁷ In order to achieve sustainable health, Rumi says:

“Inasmuch as you have not died, your agony has been prolonged: be extinguished in the dawn, O candle of Tiráz!”

*Wield the mace against yourself: shatter egoism to pieces, for the bodily eye is (as) cottonwool in the ear.*¹⁸

In the story of “Parrot and Merchant”, he writes:

*“The meaning of dying (as conveyed) by the parrot was supplication (self-abasement): make thyself dead in supplication and poverty (of spirit), that the breath of Jesus may revive thee and make thee fair and blessed as itself.”*¹⁵

*“When the mental self is eliminated, man becomes Godly. In the light with sublimity and purification of soul, all pains and suffering of intellectual errors and false beliefs seems trivial and insignificant. The affliction becomes sweet (to the sufferer) when he sees happiness: the medicine becomes sweet (to the sick man) when he regards health.”*¹⁸

Rumi talks about that the effect of sublimity and purification (which are results of elimination of self) elsewhere and he shows how the lower level requirements are removed and upper level requirements are replaced due to this spiritual transformation.

*“I came all the way to this place for the sake of dinars: as soon as I arrived, I became drunken with sight (contemplation).” A person ran to the baker for bread: on seeing the beauty of the baker, he gave up the ghost. Like the desert Arab who drew water from the well and tasted the Water of Life from the (lovely) face of Joseph. Moses went to fetch fire: he beheld such a Fire (the Burning Bush) that he escaped from (searching after) fire.*¹⁵

In the Story of “King and Handmaid”, Rumi explains the alchemy art of love after removal of mental self, which is some sort of psychological sublimation.²⁰ In “The Works of Shams of Tabriz”, he echoes this voice clearly:

“I was dead, I became alive. The governance of love came, I became the everlasting governance.”

DISCUSSION

In Rumi’s style of thinking, the child is an optimist, simple, trusting, and full of natural hope, happiness, and vitality according to his nature; in this situation, he enjoys the perfect mental health. Since humans are social creatures, environmental inductions, titles, and social values form a false identity for him. For Rumi, when a man is submitted to this false subjective identity, he moves away from his primordial human nature. The subjective identity imposes a series of false beliefs and cognitive

errors on the mind to preserve his survival. Their continuation and stability lead to failures and feelings of worthlessness in person; it is a symptom of depression.

The findings of this study on the quality of subjective identity formation are to some extent in line with the ideas of Locke.²¹ For the emancipation of humanity from the grip of subjective identity and its tricks, Rumi presents correct cognitive patterns of man and his high status in the universe. Expressions like a king, the successor of God on earth, and dominant on ideas confirm human abilities to dominate over his self. In this regard, psychologists also believe that emphasis on potential capabilities of the human leads to feelings of self-worth and it prevents depression.²²

Rumi tries to represent a kind, compassionate and eager pattern of the Creator by improving individuals’ worldview. This perspective causes the emergence of beneficial effects of positive factors such as optimism and hope. The influence of this perspective on the physical and mental health of man has been approved by many studies.^{19,20,25,28} This study also discovers some cognitive distortions and false beliefs imposed in a person’s mind by subjective self to preserve its survival including emptiness of subjective identity, narrow perspective of mind, living between past and future as well as wasting present, and subjective squinted view. Repetition and continuation of these human cases cause mental illness.

In this study, the emptiness of subjective identity was found as one of the main reasons for mental illness. According to Rumi, attachment and affiliation to social arbitrary titles and values is a cognitive distortion formed by subjective identity. Since it is empty, their loss causes sadness. In addition, titles and other social values are arbitrary, not inherit according to Rumi’s idea. A meaningful man not only dominates them but also employs these affairs to reach perfection. This study is in line with many psychological researches about the feeling of emptiness, and vacuous that is a cause for depression.^{13, 20, 22, 26}

Subjective identity’s life between past and future is another pathogen factor in this study because it leads to waste of present time. Emphasis on the dark and illusionary past frustrations is a symptom of depression. Such a patient suffers from both past pains and astonishment of future darkness. Rumi believes that while the loss of past opportunities is painful and harmful, the second and double loss is a waste of the real time (present).⁷ Religious teachings invite people to live in the present time. Ali (as) states: “Live in present time and seize opportunities between two nothingnesses, the lost past that cannot be returned and it is nothing for present as well as the non-come future that is also nothing”.²⁴ The famous

Iranian poet Sa'di Shirazi deliberately composes: "Oh Sa'di, yesterday has gone and tomorrow is not available / seize the opportunities between the two today".²³ Imam Sadeq believes that being sad for the past prevents the person from thinking for the future.²⁴

Before the formation of subjective identity, the man had a holistic quality acted as a unit like a holistic mirror. After the formation of identity, it is broken and acts as a representative of one of the self. Apart from unity, it gives individuals a kind of small deep disappointment.¹⁴ Before the formation of subjective identity, the man had been a part of being and as big as the being regardless of thinking about its bigness.¹⁴ In the story of "Elephant in the dark room," elephant (collection of life) is a part of a whole being, and dark room represents subjective identity constructed of illusions. The subjective identity observes the exact thing that it likes, and every person sees the elephant according to his narrow mental framework. This understanding is away from reality. Unreal understandings may cause cynicism of the universe and its events. Researchs indicate that disappointment and pessimism end in depression.²⁵ This finding is in line with the cognitive model of Beck⁸ arguing that thoughts such as cynicism and disappointment have important roles in the etiology and phenomenology of depression.

The squinted view is another cause of subjective cognitive distortion that imposes a subjective identity on self. Continuation and stability of this situation imprison man in the jail of subjective identity (self); thus, life is consumed in wretchedness, boredom, and unhappiness. For Rumi, greed causes squinted view. When a person sees himself humiliated or absurd, he seeks the world from this humiliated identification perspective. The identification is also the reflection of humiliation and both are based on illusion.⁷ Rumi argues that illusion and squinted view are different forms of distortion of mind. Repetition and persistence of cognitive distortions influence on a person's main beliefs and cause the emergence of inappropriate responses such as depression.²⁵ A person will be a prisoner of greed and demand as long as he desires to have a certain attribute. His elimination of subjective identity is the remedy suggested for this cognitive distortion by Rumi. He says:

I found (true) individuality in non-individuality; therefore I wove (my) individuality into non-individuality.¹⁸

Cognitive distortions and dysfunctional beliefs may cause cynicism of the universe and its events. Researchs indicate that cynicism and disappointment can lead to depression.²⁵ This finding is in line with the cognitive model of Beck¹¹ arguing that thoughts such as cynicism and disappointment

have important roles in the etiology and phenomenology of depression. From the perspective of Rumi, life is a dynamic movement, and it is new in every moment such as running water or for children states. After the establishment of a series of fictitious and arbitrary values in mind, he sees the world from an obsolete device and an enclosed room window of the world (worldview). Continuation of such perspective results in absurdity and depression.⁷ The findings of this study in this regard are in line with researchs of Abela and Skitch²⁶ and Beck¹¹ arguing that impairment of cognitive processes and misinterpretation of self and environment causes depression.

Mindfulness that is called the third wave of treatment has been expressed deliberately in the fifth book of Masnavi by Rumi in the story of Guesthouse. Mindfulness can be defined in different ways, but the common point in all definition is contemplation with flexibility, openness, and curiosity. This simple definition articulates three important issues. First, mindfulness is the process of awareness not the act of thinking; mindfulness includes attention to events coming in our minds in every moment without being caught in the trap of our own thoughts. Second, in mindfulness status, we have a certain attitude, openness, and curiosity. Instead of escaping from painful thoughts, we are open and curious about them; we allow them to come and go. Third, we are flexible in mindfulness. In other words, we guide our attention to various aspects of life. Its application causes our awareness, and we appraise all our moments. This method is used in the treatment of mental illnesses like depression (Russ Harris, 2014). Russ Harris's definition of mindfulness is completely consistent with the implications and teaching of Guesthouse in Masnavi. Likening human body to a guesthouse, the entrance and exit of both good and bad ideas, and the guests' welcoming situation are explained in verses 3644 to 3706 of the fifth book of Masnavi. It has been argued that determining the true identity of the man is one of the objectives of mindfulness in the works of Rumi from a cognitive therapy approach. It leads to transformation of vain thoughts and other cognitive distortions in psychological patients.¹⁹ Cognitive therapy based on mindfulness causes identification of patients' thinking style and action. In this way, the patient tries to go to the next stage and to see himself in an upper level; doing so, he can continue his personal treatment in calmness and awareness.

The researchers conducted by Evans et al,²⁷ Segal et al,²⁸ and Bohlmeijer et al²⁹ have shown that mindfulness improves mood and its short-time teaching reduces the symptoms of depression. The use of mindfulness-based cognitive treatment in

improving symptoms of depression and removing individual psychological problems has been increased in the last two decades; it has led to transformation of vain thoughts and other cognitive distortions in psychiatric patients.¹⁹

CONCLUSION

For Rumi, subjective identity or mental self that is established due to social arbitrary inductions and values imposes some attributes to mind while each attribute causes a mental illness such as depression. To; Rumi, the main cause of mental disorder in human beings is moving away from the ego principle, which is divine, pure primordial nature. For Rumi, Cognitive Distortions are Causes of Mental Illness include: Obsolescence, mechanical qualities, and stereotypes of the self, Narrow perspective, Squinted view, Self's emptiness, Existence of self between two illusionary times of past and future and Cultural inferiority against mass suggestions. Another key concept in the teachings of Rumi is mindfulness. This concept has beautifully been expressed in the form of a story called "Guest-house" in the fifth book of his Masnavi.

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